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RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 1758
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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [PK](#)

SUBJECT: SINDH - GUNFIRE HITS MOTORCADE OF NATIONAL
ASSEMBLY MEMBER

REF: A. KARACHI 426

[1](#)B. KARACHI 477

Classified By: Classified by Consul General Kay Anske for reasons 1.4 b
and d.

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: A motorcade carrying National Assembly Member (MNA) Haider Abbas Rizvi, a member of the Muttahida Quami Movement (MQM) political party, and his family was struck by gunfire on August 17. Neither Rizvi nor any of his family members were hurt, but a police officer escorting the motorcade was wounded. Sindh Home Department officials claimed the gunfire originated from a skirmish between police and protestors, but MQM officials disputed the official version. Instead, one party leader alleged a conspiracy and pointed to members of the Pashtun community as possible culprits behind the incident. Rizvi claimed privately that a Pakistan People's Party (PPP) warlord was behind the attack. MQM has repeatedly accused Pashtuns of harboring Taliban sympathies and has had strained relations with the PPP in the past. The party may be playing up the incident to gain public support. End summary.

[1](#)2. (SBU) On August 17, gunfire struck a motorcade carrying National Assembly Member (MNA) Haider Abbas Rizvi, a member of the Muttahida Quami Movement (MQM) political party, and his family as they were returning from a religious ritual at the Mewa Shah graveyard in Karachi. A uniformed policeman escorting Rizvi's vehicle was shot, but the MNA and his family were not injured.

[1](#)3. (SBU) Media reports quoted Sindh Home Department officials as stating that Rizvi's caravan was hit by stray bullets from a gunfight between police and protestors, who were upset over a land allocation plan. MQM leader Altaf Hussain, in self-imposed exile in London, insisted that the attack was part of a conspiracy to create civil disorder in Karachi.

[1](#)4. (C) RSO sources told Post on August 18 that they concurred with the version reported in the media. However, Nasreen Jalil, the Naib Nazim (Deputy Mayor) of Karachi and a member of the MQM inner circle, told the Consul General (CG) on August 17 that Rizvi was the target of the attack. She informed the CG that this marks the second attempt on Rizvi's life in recent weeks. RSO sources confirmed that about two weeks ago, two men on a motorcycle fired a bullet at the door to Rizvi's house. He was not at home at the time and no injuries resulted.

15. (C) Exasperated with the Sindh Home Secretary for characterizing the gunfire as random, Jalil speculated that, as Rizvi's district is home to a large number of Pashtuns, long-time MQM rivals, ethnic hatred could be the motive behind the assault. Rizvi told PolCons on August 18, however, that he believed a local Pakistan People's Party (PPP) warlord was behind the shooting.

16. (C) Comment: Post doubts that MQM leaders will accept the theory that the attack was anything other than a direct attempt on Rizvi. The party has repeatedly accused the Pashtun community of Taliban sympathies and called on the local business community to help it resist a takeover by Islamic extremists (reftels). MQM strains with coalition partner PPP surfaced in Rizvi's accusation. By trumpeting the attack as an example of Pashtun or PPP action against MQM, the party may be hoping to sway public sentiment. On the other hand, the official story does have some questionable elements. Police security details, such as that accompanying Rizvi, usually receive advance information from police units and plot alternate routes away from trouble spots. In addition, this was the second time that shots have been fired at him.
Anske